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**From:** O'Brien, Elisabeth (DPH)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 20, 2007 2:44 PM  
**To:** Nassif, Julianne (DPH); Pribeck, Kristen (DPH); Salemi, Charles (DPH)  
**Cc:** Stevenson, Allan (DPH)  
**Subject:** Wish List #1

**Wish list #1 for the chemists in the Drug Lab:**

Kristen and I were talking about some of the more tangible items on a drug lab wish list (camera, for example) but I began to think of some of the other things that would improve the overall health of the drug lab---short of hiring more chemists which we all know would be ideal.

I know that the workload and demands within the drug analysis laboratory has increased significantly over the past couple of years. Although I can't really ever remember a time when the flow of samples into the lab was slow, the voluminous submission of so many cases of varying complexity arriving at the laboratory at this time is very overwhelming given the amount of staffing. In this day and age when the documentation and analytical needs of samples are so great it is easy to forget that there is anything else other than dealing with the sample backlog on a day in and day out basis. That being said, I have a few thoughts on ways to improve the training and possibly morale of the chemists who work here.

**NEAFS membership for those who are eligible:** This has come up in court on the witness stand regarding membership in professional organizations. Some of us have paid our own dues to NEAFS for the last several years. Dues are \$40 per year for a regular membership (an analyst who has 3 years of experience).

**Courtroom testimony:** This would be something particularly suitable to set up with the Feds since they need our testimony more than other courts. It seems like this is certainly something they could/should accommodate given their special requests as of late. This could be something with a minimal time commitment (a morning or afternoon) but needs to be done off-site and in a courtroom. A tour of the courtroom and basic testimony expectations should be covered, particularly for the new chemists who have never testified. This is something that I would like to be involved with.

**Continuing education and training:** This continues to be an issue for those of us who go to court. It also leads to the obvious advantage that networking within the industry is always a good thing.

"The biggie"---DEA school in VA. Tuition is free, however need travel and accommodations. The Gold Standard in controlled substance analyst training.

NEAFS (Northeast Association of Forensic Scientists) meeting in the fall: minimal tuition, travel and accommodations for approx 2 nights. Sometimes held [redacted] within driving distance (not this year, it is in NY), the Drug lab needs help getting even one day off and the approx \$85-\$100 to go even just for the day. I find it shocking that we are the largest controlled substance lab in New England and we have no representation at NEAFS.

HIDTA (Hi Intensity Drug Trafficking) free tuition, local (Methuen)---just need the time to go, covers topics such as Drug Trends and Clandestine Labs.

Agilent and other analytical training that is local and FREE!

**Resurrect the newsletter:** This is something that I worked on for a number of years as it provided information to police departments and provided the laboratory with good visibility. I continue to get requests for more, but as my duties and responsibilities have increased I have been unable to find the time to sit down and put it together. Kristen, we discussed the possibility of your assistance and better software, but again this is a time and workload issue.

In my opinion, if you ask any analyst in the drug lab which of the above would be a priority for them the answer would be **“training of any kind”!** Each chemist may have an area that they would like to further develop or have an interest in, but finding the time to getaway from the lab bench/prep area given our resources has been difficult. Anyway, these were just a few quick thoughts I had....I know some may be easy accommodations and some are not possible at this time.

Thanks, Betsy

Oh- one more tangible item you already may know about—that is another bar code reader for the evidence office.